

Message Text

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70

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-02 FAA-00 L-03 NSC-05

SS-15 /055 W

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R 291457Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8599

INFO PANCANAL

USSOUTHCOM

FAA CZ

UNCLAS PANAMA 5275

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, PN, PQ

SUBJECT: CIVIL AVIATION: INQUIRY CONCERNING HOWARD AFB COMMER-
CIAL CHARTER FLIGHTS

1. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FIRST-PERSON DIPLOMATIC NOTE
DREU-155/1551-2, 1201-3(E) DATED JULY 15, 1976 (COPY
POUCHED ARA/PAN) STATING FOREIGN MINISTRY IS INFORMED THAT
CHANNEL 8 (SOUTHERN COMMAND NETWORK-SCN, CANAL ZONE) HAS
ANNOUNCED THAT THE U.S. PRIVATE AIR CARRIER, EASTERN AIR-
LINES, IS PROVIDING COMMERCIAL AIR FLIGHTS BETWEEN THE
CANAL ZONE AND THE U.S. NOTE CONTINUES (INFORMAL EMBASSY
TRANSLATION): "I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR EXCELLENCY'S TELL-
ING ME IF THIS IS TRUE, AND IF SO, WHY THIS U.S. COMPANY
IS PERMITTED TO ENGAGE IN THE BUSINESS OF COMMERCIAL CIVIL
AVIATION IN THE CANAL ZONE." NOTE ENCLOSES A CLIPPING
OF LETTER TO EDITOR OF "MATUTINO" FROM FORMER EDITOR
JORGE ENRIQUE RAMIREZ, PUBLISHED JULY 15, IN WHICH HE
REFERS TO THE SCN ANNOUNCEMENT ON EASTERN AIRLINE
FLIGHTS FROM HOWARD AIR FORCE BASE, DOUBTS THAT THEY
COULD IN FACT BE CHARTER FLIGHTS FOR MILITARY PERSONNEL
SINCE THE U.S. AIR FORCE HAS ENOUGH AIRCRAFT FOR ITS OWN
NEEDS, AND ASKS WHY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IS NOT INFORMED
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CONCERNING THE MATTER.

2. SIMILAR, BUT APPARENTLY MORE EXTENSIVE COMPLAINT CONCERNING USE OF HOWARD FOR SUCH FLIGHTS WAS LODGED IN 1972. (FILES CONTAINING INCOMING NOTE -- DREU-54/1551-2--AND EMBASSY REPLY HAVE SINCE BEEN RETIRED, BUT WE HAVE COPY OF DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR REPLY--A-5316 OF 26 MAY 72--FROM LOCAL FAA FILES). IN CURRENT NOTE, FOREIGN MINISTER MENTIONS NEITHER AIR TRANSPORT AGREEMENT OF 1949 NOR 1936 TREATY, ALTHOUGH HE WAS QUOTED IN LOCAL PRESS AS REFERRING TO BOTH IN CONFIRMING THAT HE HAD SENT OFFICIAL INQUIRY TO EMBASSY CONCERNING FLIGHTS. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO REPLY TO CURRENT NOTE IN GENERAL TERMS, WITHOUT SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO TREATIES OR AGREEMENTS, AND REQUESTS AUTHORIZATION TO SEND NOTE AS FOLLOWS: "I HAVE THE HONOR TO REFER TO YOUR EXCELLENCY'S NOTE NO. DREU-155/1551-2, 1201-3(E) OF JULY 15, 1976, WHICH INQUIRED ABOUT AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON CHANNEL 8, UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICE, CONCERNING FLIGHTS BY AIRCRAFT BELONGING TO EASTERN AIRLINES BETWEEN THE CANAL ZONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. I WISH TO INFORM YOUR EXCELLENCY THAT THE AIRCRAFT IN QUESTION HAVE BEEN CONTRACTED FOR THE USE OF UNITED STATES MILITARY AUTHORITIES IN THE CANAL ZONE. THE FLIGHTS UTILIZING THESE AIRCRAFT ARE ARRANGED TO MEET SPECIFIC AIR TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY AS THEY ARISE. SIMILAR FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN TAKING PLACE OVER A NUMBER OF YEARS. THUS WHILE ITS AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN UTILIZED FOR SPECIFIC MILITARY PURPOSES, EASTERN AIRLINES HAS NOT BEEN PERMITTED TO ENGAGE IN THE NORMAL BUSINESS OF PROVIDING COMMERCIAL AIR SERVICE IN THE CANAL ZONE. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING."

JORDEN

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